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January 31, 2007

Ex Parte

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Notice of Oral Ex Parte Presentation*
WT Docket No. 06-150

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On January 30, 2007, Charla Rath and Michael Samscock, representing Verizon Wireless, met with James Schlichting, Paul D'Ari, Paul Murray and Wayne Leighton of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau on the above-referenced rulemaking, and in particular the Commission's consideration of additional performance requirements for portions of the 700 MHz band.

The views we expressed regarding performance requirements in general were consistent with our comments previously filed in this proceeding. Verizon Wireless continues to oppose as unnecessary, administratively burdensome and counterproductive the adoption of new rules that would dictate where licensees must provide service or that would reclaim "unused" portions of a geographic licensee. Such rules would be counter to valid, longstanding Commission policy that offers licensees flexibility to respond to the market, a policy that has helped to deliver digital voice and data services to most of the U.S. population.

Should the Commission determine to change its current performance requirements for licenses in the 700 MHz band, we suggested that the Commission adopt several "safe harbors." A licensee would be deemed to have met the substantial service requirement if at license renewal it (1) covers two-thirds of the population of the licensed area, or (2) covers 75% of the geographic area of at least 20 percent of the rural areas in its licensed area. The Commission would also state that it will consider other factors in determining satisfaction of substantial service, such as coverage of counties or geographic area where population density is less than or equal to 100 persons per square mile; significant geographic coverage; coverage of unique or isolated communities or business parks; or expanding Enhanced 911 services into areas that have limited or no access to such services.

In 2004, the Commission adopted a similar “safe harbor” approach for other services operating in different spectrum bands, concluding that this approach would promote service to rural areas by “increasing [carriers’] flexibility to develop rural-focused business plans and deploy spectrum-based services in more sparsely populated areas without being bound to concrete population or geographic coverage requirements.” It also stated, “By adopting substantial service “safe harbors,” as well as by providing examples of the sorts of factors we will consider in evaluating substantial service showings, we believe we satisfactorily balance the competing interests of maximizing licensee flexibility while providing some measure of certainty.”¹ The rationale for the Commission’s safe harbor approach would also make sense for the 700 MHz band.

Pursuant to section 1.1206(b)(2) of the Commission’s rules, an electronic copy of the letter is being filed for inclusion in the above-referenced docket. Please direct any questions regarding this filing to the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Michael P. Samsock
Senior Attorney

cc: James D. Schlichting
Paul D’Ari
Paul Murray
Wayne Leighton

¹ *Facilitating the Provision of Spectrum-Based Services to Rural Areas and Promoting Opportunities for Rural Telephone Companies to Provide Spectrum Based Services*, WT Docket No. 02-381, *Report and Order and Further NPRM*, FCC 04-166, released September 27, 2004, at para. 76-77.